



## New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

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### Definitions

**“Resource Family”** means a family who provides foster, adoptive (pre-finalization adoptive homes), or relative care for a child needing out-of-home placement.

### Purpose of Support Services

**6-5-89**

The primary responsibility of the Worker during the adoptive process is to help the family through the transition phase and integrate the child into the family system. Regardless of the age of the child to be adopted, the addition of a new member into the family will have an impact on the family system. The Worker must be sensitive to the potential needs of the child and family during this period. In addition it is essential to link the family and child to as many natural and community support systems as are appropriate and available to facilitate the integration and acceptance of the new family member into the community. All services available to biologically constituted families should be made available to the adoptive family.

### Role of the Worker

**6-5-89**

Initially, the task of the Worker is to establish an open relationship with all members of the family. The Worker explains clearly to the child and family that he is there to help them adjust to each other and that his role during visits with the family is to provide support, to discuss issues as they arise and, generally, to help all family members through the adjustment process.

They should be helped to understand that there will be some early discomfort and some fear and maybe even misgivings but that these are normal feelings that all new families experience. The family is told what to expect during the adoption placement process preceding finalization, including the visiting schedule. The Worker reassures the adoptive family that in addition to scheduled visits he is always available by phone. He clearly explains that if he is not in the office when they call, his supervisor is available or he will return their call on the next working day.

## **Contact Schedule**

**5-10-2010**

**In-Person Visitation Requirements** -- The first visit with the new family takes place within five working days of placement. Worker-client contacts are enhanced during the first two months of the child's placement out of home.

Thereafter, monthly visits are required for all children in placement in New Jersey or within 50 miles of the border, at a minimum, until the adoption is final. See [CP&P-III-C-3-100](#), In-Person Visits with Clients and Out-of-Home Placement Providers (MVRs).

## **Transitional Phases of Adoption Process**

**7-26-2004**

During the beginning phase or the first three (3) months of placement, the Worker's tasks are geared to the needs of the family.

1. The first month will most likely revolve around information sharing and networking issues such as:
  - Reviewing the background information shared with the family in the pre-placement interview, for pre-placement guidelines see [CP&P-IV-C-6-100](#).
  - Helping the family arrange the most appropriate school setting for the school age child. Home teaching (schooling) is not permitted for a child in a CP&P selected adoptive home placement. See [CP&P-VII-A-1-100](#).
  - Clarifying for the adoptive parents their legal rights regarding obtaining appropriate educational, financial and other resources for the child.
  - Helping the family obtain the necessary medical/therapeutic services the child might need. For subsidy eligibles, review the special services available through the adoption subsidy program.
  - Linking the parents to parent groups and/or self-help groups dealing with the specific disability their child might have.
  - Supporting the child and the family with reassurance that their feelings, worries and joys are natural and understandable.

## **Explanation of SSI Benefits**

**3-21-88**

Children who are eligible to receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits are not necessarily eligible to receive the benefits after the adoption is finalized. Eligibility is contingent upon the child's medical disability and the adoptive family's financial status. The Worker explains to the adoptive parents that they must apply for the benefits by contacting the Social Security Administration. When the adoption is finalized, the

Worker notifies the Bureau of Revenue Development, by memo, that the child has been adopted and provides the date of final hearing and the adoptive parents' names. See [CP&P-IV-C-1-1100](#)

### **Child's Income Tax Status**

**3-21-88**

Adoptive parents are required to support the child during the supervision period; therefore, they may claim the normal tax exemption regardless of whether the child has been in the adoption home the entire taxable year.

### **Out of State**

**3-21-88**

If the adoptive family must move to another state before finalization of the adoption, the Worker notifies the Central Office Adoption Services Unit as soon as possible. See [CP&P-VIII-D-2-600](#), Requirements for Finalization.

### **Delayed Finalization**

**10-15-86**

In some cases the family/child may not be ready to finalize the adoption after the appropriate period of supervision in the adoptive home. When this occurs, the Worker helps the family to identify and evaluate barriers impeding the completion of the adoption. A time frame of three (3) months is established, during which the Worker helps the family work on resolution of the barriers. At least monthly contact is maintained with the family, more frequent if necessary to reach the goal of issuing the consent within nine months of the date of placement. Professional counseling may be necessary, and can be offered, as a special service to the family.

If problems continue, the LO Manager reviews the situation on a monthly basis. After fifteen months, the consent must be issued or approval received by the Supervisor, Field Operations, to continue the child's placement in the home.

### **Unsuccessful Placement**

**12-27-2004**

In spite of the study, evaluation, and preparation that is part of the adoption process, and the support services which are offered, some placements are unsuccessful. If, after consistent and intensive efforts by the Worker and other available appropriate resources differences cannot be resolved, neither the family nor the child should be pressured to make a commitment. The Worker helps all members of the family accept separation without guilt or recrimination. The family will need help to talk to each other openly about their feelings and will need the Worker's support throughout this painful period. The child is helped to understand that it is not his fault that the placement did not work. In preparing the child for another adoptive family both the child and the family need assurance that they are not the only family to experience disruption and, in fact, most children who cannot remain in one family, are successfully placed in another family and adopted.

When the placement is disrupting and the child's removal is indicated, the Worker notifies his Supervisor and completes the Adoption Disruption Report, CP&P Form [14-174](#). The Worker outlines a plan which meets the child's needs including whether immediate placement in another adoptive home is desirable. If adoption placement is determined to be the new plan for the child, forward selection material to the C.O. Adoption Unit within two months of the disruption.

If the child requires temporary care prior to further adoption placements, replacement of the child in his former approved foster home or relative care home is the first consideration unless it can be documented that the placement would have a negative influence on the child's emotional or physical well-being.

If abuse/neglect of the child is involved, follow the policy and procedures as outlined in Protective Services, [CP&P-II-C-6-100](#)